ACROSS THE CONTINENT ON A BICYCLE

Making a Wheel Track

CHART FURNISHED FOR POINTING OUT THE STRAIGHT COURSE.

Route Leads From the Atlantic to the Pacific Through Twelve States.

One of the foremost of the National Wheelmen's League sat in his office with charts spread out before him. Upon his face there was a delighted expression and at his right hand were letters and manuscripts.

"I am working," said he to the intruder, "upon the greatest bicycle scheme that ever agitated the sporting fraternity. Little by little we conceive great ideas and develop them. Each sounds more preposterous than the last, but when we bring it around all who come to scoff remain to admire. This wheeling scheme is the finest thing ever thought out by a wheeling man. It came up at one of our meetings by chance. And I have looked into it and found it feasible.

"The scheme," continued he, reaching toward a map upon his desk, "is this. To establish a bicycle track from coast to coast so that wheelmen can journey from New York to San Francisco as easily if not as rapidly as they now do by train. Such tours have been undertaken and partly carried out. One man would wheel from Salt Lake City to Buffalo. Another, at some time, would start at Chicago and wheel to the Pacific Coast. But they seldom wanted to take the trip twice. It was too tiresome. Roads were too bad. Too many mountain paths had to be climbed, too many prairies tortured through. But I am looking into the matter so as to do away with all this.

"My plan for a route runs like this: I would start, say, at the Pacific Coast, and going north from San Francisco would strike across for Sacramento. Once in Nevada I would keep pretty close to the railroads to steer clear of the Santa Rosa Mountains. The railroads have mapped out things pretty well along there, and I should hug the track, taking only excursions by the hour all through Nevada and Utah until I reached Great Salt Lake. Here there is a very pretty chance for a run south to Salt Lake City and another one north to Canada. Nowhere is the country more delightful than right here. It is well watered, magnificently drained by nature, and it boasts the fruits of the Pacific Coast as well as the shade of the interior. There might be quite a stay here.

"Striking the railroad again at Salt Lake, I should continue east, keeping the locomotive constantly in eye. I should hit Wyoming in the southwest corner and steer through the lower part of it. Now wheel upon a lake steamer you can go you have mountains, indeed, to avoid, for north of you are the Big Horn and the Sweetwater chains, and south lie the Rockies in their most formidable peaks. Pike's Peak is not so far away from you now, especially when you strike south at Laramie and head for a few days directly south towards Denver.

INTERESTING POINTS.

"If you want an interesting trip you can strike Denver and branch aside to Cripple Creek. Here you will find it hard wheeling, but so varied that you are willing to put the wheel in train and ride part of the way yourself. This is aside from the quick cross-country trip, and little latitudes are allowed.

"Now, you leave Denver and go north again, striking the main railroad near Cheyenne. Then on you go towards Nebraska, making almost a bee line through the southern section of that State. The North Platte river accompanies you part of the way, and you find yourself in a densely populated country where wheelmen abound. When you reach Omaha, toward which you are headed, you find a very center of wheeling circles, as it is the center, geographically, of the United States.

"At Omaha you leave the railroad and wheel across Iowa from Council Bluffs to Davenport without deviation. Here the scenery is particularly beautiful. The verdure is soft, the air is mild—for of course—your trip is taken in summer—and the people seem heartily to cheer you on your way. The raggedness of the mountains seems to have faded as though into the softness of a valley. After you leave Iowa and strike into Illinois you still hear people speaking of Iowa as though it were a garden State from which they were unwillingly absent.

"The Illinois track lies far south of the railroads, for you are in a State so thickly populated that, to ride pleasantly, you must seek the country, where you have before sought the towns and villages. The clearest way is by a loop path from Rock Island to Chicago. You touch Ottawa and Aurora, but as far as possible you inquire your way along the country roads. You find your path very level and the roads well kept; when you reach Chicago you put up your wheel for a dozen of the side trips that are part of the exhibition. There is a good wheel path north to Milwaukee. It skirts Lake Michigan and is the most romantic jolt of the journey if you choose to make it.

"At Milwaukee you can pocket your pride and your ambition, and take a trip across to Detroit, where the best roads await you. You can now go directly south again, and strike the trail fifty miles beyond Chicago, and just so much nearer the Atlantic coast toward which you are aiming.

TO LAKE ERIE.

"You are now in Indiana, where there are good roads along the railroad, and these you follow across the State, and into Ohio. At Toledo you begin to breathe the air of Lake Erie; and from there to Cleveland, and on to Buffalo, you have the satisfaction of wheeling daily along a path that keeps the railroad in sight, yet lies along a lake that coods you by day and sings to you by night.

"At Buffalo you start to cut New York State in two pieces. You go through it at Rochester and Syracuse, and bring up at Saratoga. From there you might keep on your way across New Hampshire and Vermont, to the Maine coast, where Portland would be your nearest point. But if you do this you must cross the Green Mountains of Vermont and the White Mountains of New Hampshire, and run your risk of a rocky approach to Portland. So the best way is to find the railroad at Saratoga, and start south from New York. It is less than 200 miles now to the sea, and as the roads are good you should fetch up in New York city in four or five days. That tours you from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

"Now," said the cycling gentleman, laying down the map, "you see the path is a feasible one. Personally I do not believe in the bicycle track. I think good roads are good enough for the wheelman, and I oppose all legislation to make macadamized or asphalt roads for wheelmen. The trouble with these is that they are never permanent, and wheeling is too important a matter to consider in the light of something soon to pass away.

"What I am aiming at, and what I do think possible, is a bicycle path across the country which shall be simply a good road. Each State can take care of its own roads, and the result will be one long stretch of good wheeling."

"My aim is to get legislation through to make the roads good first. And second to connect the different paths. For example, there is one very fine stretch of road in Indiana. Every wheelman who goes through it speaks of it. But approaching this good stretch, and leading from it, is a very heavy, rough piece of country. This could be easily fixed, as there are only a few miles of it. Now, with bicycle legislation we would get that attended to.

ROAD QUESTION.

"What has hampered us more than anything in this cross-country project are the wheeling enthusiasts. These gentlemen insist upon bicycle paths and so we get nothing. A macadamized bicycle path costs in a rocky locality $15,000 per mile. Now take this same locality and use the road that is already in it by merely improving it and the cost will not be $3,000. You can make a mile of very bad road into very good road for that sum. That is what I mean by intelligent wheeling legislation.

"The time to take such a trip is what is against it. But people are not actually obliged to go from the Golden Gate to New York Harbor in one trip. They can meet each other half way, if it is a matter of family meeting, or people on both sides of the country can take trips as they please.

"The time for the journey would be about forty days, if every man were a wheeling expert, and were prepared to take a century run every day. For myself, I should just double the days. I should take eighty days for the trip and do something like fifty miles a day. I might even let the railroad help me in rainy weather. Speaking of that, I should have mentioned that the much-dreaded prairie lands are particularly fine in dry seasons, being springy and level and soft to the body.

"Across the country in eighty days will be the wheelman's attraction a few years hence. Now it looks funny, but that is what Jules Verne's idea of "Round the World in Eighty Days" did to people years ago. Now we can belt the sphere in seventy days." JAMES BARTON.

Trip Takes Forty Days

GREAT LAKES AND THE MOUNTAINS FOR SCENERY.

Prairies Make the Best Riding Region In the World, It Is Said.

THE WOMAN CYCLIST.

She Reigns Supreme This Season. Timely Suggestions for Her.

The woman cyclist reigns this season. The number of women who have taken to the wheel shows an increase of 75 per cent, and the makers of machines for women can scarcely keep pace with their orders.

In the selection of a machine most women who are making their debut as riders this season need a little wholesome advice, and if any points of value are secured from this article its purpose will have been fulfilled.

So far as the costume is concerned, knickers are very largely worn in Europe, especially in Paris, but in America they are the exception more than the rule, and therefore this is addressed to ladies who will ride in skirts.

The question of weight in connection with ladies' machines has recently received more attention at the hands of manufacturers than ever before, and the consequence is reliable machines may now be purchased, fitted with brake, mud-guards, dress-guard and gear-case, at just about thirty pounds in weight.

A lady, unless she be particularly strong, should not have her machine geared to more than 56 inches, or, at the most, 60 inches. The back wheels of ladies' machines are usually 28 inches or 26 inches in diameter, and a very simple rule for ascertaining the gear is as follows: Take the diameter of back wheel and multiply by the number of teeth on the bracket chain wheel, divide the result by the number of teeth on the ring of the back wheel hub—which is often seven—and the result is obtained. For instance the gear of a machine with a 28-inch back wheel and a 14-tooth hub ring would be 56 inches, and if fitted with a 15-tooth bracket chain wheel, 60 inches.

In selecting a machine a lady should see that the handle bars and saddle can be so adjusted as to enable her to sit perfectly upright, for nothing looks much worse than to see a lady adopting what is known as the "scorcher" attitude.

Large makers build machines in more than one size, and exceptionally short and exceptionally tall ladies should have machines built higher and lower respectively in the frames than standard patterns.

The pedals should be rubber, and not all steel, the latter with their sharp points being more liable to catch in the rider's dress. Pedals to suit the width of foot can, of course, be selected.

A really first-class machine by a leading firm will cost nearly $100, or perhaps a little more, but, of course, very good machines can be purchased for less than this amount.

There are several little things a rider should be particularly careful about, and one of these is the application of the brake. The brakes fitted are usually those which act on the tire, and should consequently not be too suddenly applied, or they will probably tear the tire.

Of course, a gear-case or chain-cover of some kind is indispensable to a ladies' machine. When an oil-retaining gear-case is fitted, not more than a teaspoonful of oil should be put into it, for if more, the oil will be sure to leak out, and the probability is the rider will find traces of it on the lower portion of her dress.

A lady will find it very convenient to mount from the curb, and will thus be enabled to properly arrange her dress. Sometimes this method of mounting is impossible. A lady will then do well to allow one of the pedals to ascend to its fullest height and descend the merest trifle, and then, placing one foot on the pedal in question, spring into the saddle, the weight of her body on the pedal necessarily causing the machine to go forward. When well going it will only be necessary to slightly raise herself in the saddle, actually standing on the pedals, and the dress will fall as it should. This will be found to be a perfectly easy accomplishment with a little practice.

A lady should neither sit too low nor too high. Her saddle should be sufficiently high to allow the foot to easily touch the under portion of the pedal when quite flat and at its lowest extremity.

BOTH WRITER AND ACCOUNTANT

Machine Inscribes Letters and Adds Figures at the Same Time.

Pittsburg Dispatch.

A machine has been invented for typewriting and adding figures at the same time. The invention is described as being intended to quickly and accurately add a column or columns of figures, and at the same time and by the same manipulation of the keys to print these figures upon a sheet of paper or a blankbook in the order in which they are added, so as to form a proof sheet, which will verify the correctness of the addition. The machine, by special adjustment, may be made to print at the end of the column the sum total of the figures, and to do this in a vertically descending, or vertically ascending or horizontal progression. Additions can be made either to the right or to the left. The printing is in full sight. The machine works with the ease of a typewriter, and its speed is only limited by the skill of the operator. It substructs by a reversing arrangement, the registering disks running one way as readily as the other. Its construction is simple, considering the variety and extent of the work done. It is adopted to printing on passbooks, which it does as readily as upon the ordinary plain sheet. It can be used to add without printing or to print without adding. If mistakes are made they can be seen at once.

Cleaning the Bicycles

GROOMING OF THE SILENT STEED A SERIOUS QUESTION.

Clubhouse With an Attendant Is Suggested for Large Cities. Some Other Pointers.

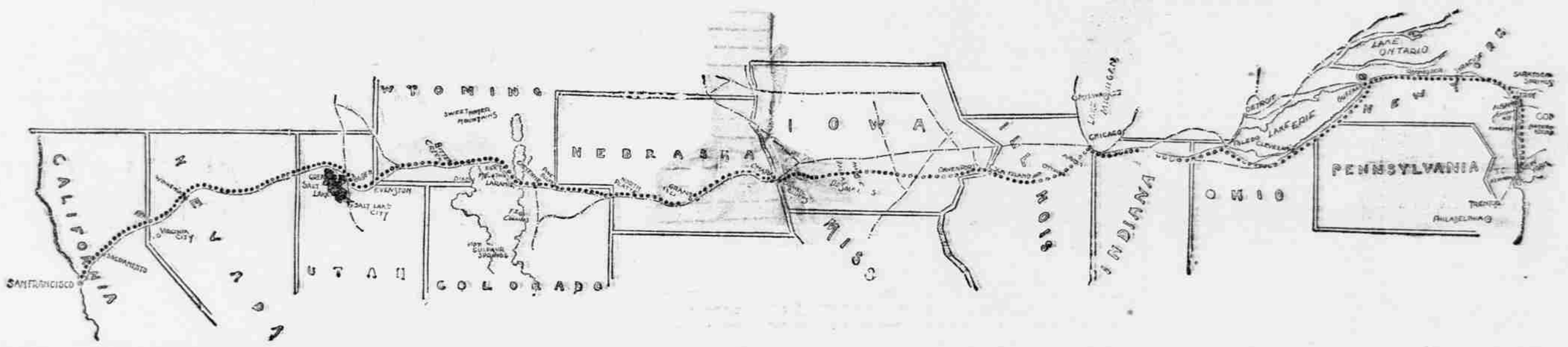
A really well-appointed clubhouse with dressing-rooms and under thoroughly responsible management where bicycles could be kept with safety and assurance of good care by efficient attendants, is a decided necessity and would undoubtedly pay well. Some of the social clubs are beginning to make arrangements of this kind, but only a few of them are well situated for the purpose, and they do not meet the wants of women and children not to mention the large number of men who have no club connections.

The cleaning question is equally urgent. The novelty of the thing seems to minimize the drudgery of the work for a while with most riders of comparative youth, but that attraction soon wears off. Who then is to do the work? Where a man-servant is kept it has been accepted as a proper thing to include the care of the bicycle among his functions. Maid-servants, however, do not take to it kindly.

They are perfectly competent to do all that is necessary, and the time required would not interfere seriously with their other duties, but experience shows that there is no surer way of making the servant question a burning one in any household than by asking a servant to wipe off a wheel after it has been brought in from a ride. In England, where the servants never think it a hardship to clean the boots, it has been found practicable to include the cleaning of bicycles among their household duties, but it is exceedingly doubtful if it will ever be possible to do so in this country. The inventors whose ingenious minds have been occupied for many months with the numerous mechanical improvements which they think are still needed to make the bicycle all that it should be, would do a more practical service to their generation if they would suggest a way out of this difficulty.—New York Post.

Madagascar Spiders.

The silk spider of Madagascar spins threads of a golden color and strong enough, according to a well-known naturalist, to hang a cork helmet on. Small textures woven of these threads are used by the natives for fastening flowers on sunshades and for other purposes.—Chicago Chronicle.



This Trans-Continental Bicycle Tour Goes Through Twelve States, Touches the Principal Lakes and Rivers, and Can Be Done in Forty to Eighty Days.

Something Like an Old-Time Mining Fever on the Pacific Coast.

(Copyright, 1896.)

San Francisco, May 7.—When, thirty years ago, Secretary Seward added to the United States by purchase a region extending about 1,500 miles northwest and southeast, and at its widest point but little less than that distance from northeast to southwest, there were many who thought the worthy Secretary had been buying a "yellow dog." But every dog has its day; Alaska is having her day now, and the yellowness of Seward's purchase is the color in its placers, from which between $3,000,000 and $4,000,000 in gold was extracted last year, and whose estimated yield for 1896 is in the neighborhood of $6,000,000. For the rush thither is on, and something like an old-time mining fever is felt, even at this distance from the vast new Northwest.

The Alaskan fever manifests itself in the usual way, by the crazy setting forth of inexperienced and ill-equipped men, with consequent suffering and hardship; and it is heightened, like every other gold fever, by the fact that less is said about these hardships than about the occasional lucky strikes of individuals. The most incredible tales about the new El Dorado were spread broadcast last winter, and in the early spring by the agents of the steamship companies, which further evinced their interest in the new fields by making a "cut rate" of $12 on first-class tickets from Seattle or Tacoma to Juneau, the point of debarkation from the Chilkat pass.

At this rate it is no wonder that many inexperienced men, without much money left after buying their tickets, were driven by lack of work into setting out for the new fields. Prof. George F. Becker of the United States Geological survey, who is preparing an elaborate report on Alaska, says that no one ought to go thither seeking gold without a return ticket and money enough to live on for one year—say $500. Experienced miners say the attempt is fairly safe with about half that sum and a return ticket. Many have started without means of any kind.

Stories of lucky "strikes" are always interesting. The prettiest one is that of Peter Wilborg, who left this State three years ago for Cook's Inlet, 600 miles west of Juneau. Last winter Wilborg banked $35,000 in this city, leaving himself $13,000 to "blow in." Not quite finishing the operation by the time he set out on his return trip in March, he stood on the deck of the steamer in Port Townsend, throwing double handfuls of silver dollars to the boys on the dock. Such a man is likely to die poor, whatever his luck. "Old Dick" Willoughby is another of the popular heroes. Until this year Willoughby never saw a railroad. He sold a mine at Hunter's Bay for $70,000, and has some promising claims left. It is said that perhaps 200 men average placer earnings as high as $20 per day in the Yukon region; but when it is added that winter is nearly nine months long in that drear neighborhood, that flour is worth $9 per 100 pounds, and bacon 50 cents a pound at Forty Mile River, and that Circle City is nearly 1,000 miles overland from Juneau, these earnings do not seem so large.

Stories of the Alaska Gold Fields.

Juneau, it must be remembered, is reached directly by boat by an easy and delightful sail behind the coast islands. In the Juneau vicinity on the coast generally men get $4 per day if they are lucky enough to find work, but must pay for their board prices considerably higher than in California. The coast ore is reduced by stamp mills, working on comparatively low-grade quartz as a rule. There are about 500 stamps along the coast. The Alaska-Treadwell company alone has nearly 300 stamps and ships $80,000 per month in gold.

Cook's Inlet is 600 miles nearly west of Juneau, and, although on the coast, the mining there is mostly of the familiar placer sort, which hasn't much changed its character since '49. Still farther west by 200 miles are the Alaska Commercial Company's stamps, on Unga Island, with a ruinored rich ore to work upon.

In the coast towns and at the stamp mills work is as methodical and uninteresting as in the States. The romance and the hardships of the miner's life lie in the inland placer district—very far inland it is, too, about and above Circle City. It is far inland because placer mining requires brawling mountain streams silting over rocky beds, and all the lower Yukon valley is flat and swampy.

Circle City lies near where the Arctic circle crosses the Yukon, an easy place to find on the map, whether its name is there or not. By water it is a trifle of about 5,000 miles from San Francisco to Circle City. Practically no miners take that route. They go over the Chilkat pass, north of Juneau, and then trail or boat the Yukon headwaters down to the city. This year, for the first time, two or three companies are running pack trains over the passes and boating miners down the Upper Yukon. Through tickets by these lines can be bought in San Francisco or Seattle.

Most of the miners, however, still go in the good old way, packing their camp kits over the pass by dog train. An outfit of about 1,200 pounds of food can be taken in on sledges, two miners usually going together. This outfit will cost about $100 to $150 in Juneau and is worth in Circle City fully twice as much. The advantage of sledging in one's outfit is that company freight goes by boat all the way 'round by the Yukon's mouth, and the charges are very high; besides the sledge miner can start much earlier in the season.

He is likely to freeze to death on the pass if he hasn't patience enough to wait for favoring weather, in a cold running from 40 to 80 degrees below zero, but gold is the lure! Some of the amateur miners paid this spring as high as $50 each for big dogs in Seattle and Port Townsend, without stopping to consider the question of their fitness for hard work under the Arctic circle. It is no joke crossing the pass. Two parties came out from Forty Mile last January whose experiences are typical. The first started January 15 with the Yukon mail of 1,200 letters and Jackson, the Indian mail carrier, arrived in Juneau on March second, having encountered weather 60 degrees below zero and having left his two white companions, who had become exhausted on the road, with half a sack of flour and some beans between them and starvation. The second party started January 29 and came through on March 7, making a little better time, though rather over a month. Mining parties going in generally start from the coast about the end of February or early in March, when the weather has somewhat moderated, but before the thaws have set in.

A Dog Train Bound for Circle City.

The pass is about 3,500 feet high; it is the custom to cache half the load and bring back the empty dog sledges after it. When the river is reached all is easy going on the ice. Indeed, when the wind is from the south the Argonauts set sail on their sledges and go merrily ice boating down the great Yukon. If the trip is taken late and the ice has gone out flatboats must be built, an operation taking about a week. The companies have small steamers on the upper river.

The frontier, when it is reached, lacks one element of the early picturesqueness of California; it is fairly orderly. In Forty Mile, although there are probably twenty saloons and dance houses, there has never been either a murder or a lynching. Yet there is no law but miners' law. The territory is not formally organized, and there is absolutely no rule except the direct result of agreement and common understanding. The harmony which prevails is doubtless due in large part to the fact that professional men and fewd women do not care to undergo the hardships of the Chilkat trip.

And the hardships are not all over when one has reached Circle City or Forty Mile. It takes so long to get in that miners generally go prepared to stay three years, or rather two winters and three summers. The thermometer ranges from 60 degrees below to 100 above. It is in summer as hot as Florida and in winter as cold as Greenland. There are in the brief, hot, wet summer, from June 1 to September 1, tiny mosquitoes of a ferocity unknown in more southern climes. In winter, if the ice has closed in rather early, there is apt to be some scarcity of food, and maybe starvation of stagnation in any case.

Nevertheless, quite a good many women as well as men brave the dangers and discomforts of the arctic winter. Some of them have tramped over the pass and floated down the rivers in bloomers; some have gone the long way around, thirty days' steamboating from here.

There is room on the Yukon for thousands of miners where now there are hundreds. The river is second only to the Amazon in size. It is larger than the Mississippi, and has as many miles of minutely branching tributaries, on any one of which there is a chance of gold and a certainty of mighty interesting prospecting. There are a full dozen navigable tributaries, giving many thousand miles of boating. It is a big country and a rich one. If I have seemed to dwell too much upon the hardships of the trip it is because there are plenty of people who can be trusted to flash the glitter of the gold in the eyes of the seekers. And there is gold in Alaska, plenty of it. The Treadway company has the largest stamp mill in the world, and makes money out of low-grade ore, as is the case in the Kaffir mines. The rich placers will be better working for when it is made easier and cheaper to get to them, and when supplies become less expensive. Winter mining can be prosecuted either by thawing a tunnel with wood fires or by blasting or quarrying the frozen gravel in blocks. In each case the washing out must be deferred until spring. Alaska is a wonderful country, but it needs capital, roads, time, and, above all, a government.

If the people in Washington were alive to the importance of Alaska, we should have government roads to the Yukon headquarters; then the boundary question would have to be settled. It is very simple, hardly a question at all. Circle City is clearly American. Certain of the placers farther up the Yukon are as clearly British. The eastern boundary of the main portion of Alaska, the 141st parallel, is an easily-drawn frontier, if not a scientific one. The questioned boundary is from Mount St. Elias southward. As to this panhandle strip, the United States claims—or should claim, if it cared enough about it to do so—that "a line parallel to the winding of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues (thirty miles) therefrom," means just what it says. The canny Canadians claim that when the Russo-British treaty of 1824, and the Russian-United States treaty of 1867 said "coast," they didn't mean "coast" at all, but "outer line of the islands." Then, why didn't they say so? The Canadian claim has absolutely no strength or hope of success, except in the negligence of Congress.

In any case, some 500 or 600 miles of the way from Juneau to Circle City lies through British territory.

J. R. JONES.

"Cut-rate" War Is Flooding the Country With Destitute Men.

Never Satisfied.

Wife—Thomas, I wish you would let me have $50.

Husband—All right, my dear; here is a hundred dollar bill for you.

Wife—Oh, thank you, Thomas, but you forgot to pay me the fifty cents you borrowed of me the other day because you were short of change.—Texas Sifter.